623
888
•887

Tzeltal NV9

[Information on the role of the "principales" in Tzeltal society has been filed in categories 624 and/or 794.]

/2 cont./

614 The chieftaincy of each clan was filled by the oldest man,
887 who was called chunel. (It seems to have the same meaning as
156 the word catinab, but some informants recognized the latter as the one used in the adjacent municipality of Oxchuc.) The office was not hereditary, and upon the death of a chunel the oldest man
156 of the clan was venerated as such. The chief of the clan was re-
614 spected and feared, because he was recognized as endowed with
888 supernatural power which, through his lab, he exercised over all
776 the members of the clan. Two informants of advanced age de-
554 fined the chunel as "the oldest one and the greatest sorcerer." The lab feeds on souls, and a person who has "done wrong" is
776 "eaten" by the lab of the one offended and dies. In this way
761 social control was exercised on and among the members of the
[784] clan, never going beyond the limits of this. The life of the in-
[626] dividual is intimately bound to the life of the lab, or guardian
776 spirit: the death of one brings with it the death of the other. All the Cancuqueros have their lab, but they hide it and sometimes
[756] deny it. The curer knows which is the lab of the sick person be-
[827] cause "he hears it in the pulse." The lab reveals itself in dreams
[787] to "its owner," with whom it speaks because "it is his own company." One person discovers the lab of another "because he sees it." The lab takes care of its owner, defends him, and is the in-
178 strument of revenge for an injury unjustly received. Today this
614 concept is intimately bound up with the omniscience of the patron
626 saint; only with the permission of San Juan can a lab "eat" the
776 soul of a chapomal, or "clan brother," and this permission is granted only in the case when the saint is unfavorably impressed by the conduct of the individual. In any case the lab never wreaks its vengeance except for a bad act that would fully justify
614 it according to the social morality. As can be seen, social con-
626 trol was not only rooted in the chief of the clan, but this function extended to the whole group, as happens at present.

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P.455-B] Teklum

621 632 178 ternated for each three-year term between the upper and lower sections.

But with the recent increase in dealings 621 632 178 between the national and regional administrative centers and the local communities, recruitment into office as president and síndico has come to depend upon the candidates' 554 possessing a knowledge of Spanish, literacy, and familiarity with the ways of Ladino society. Because of the relative scarcity of such skills, selection of these two officials has tended to ignore the former residence requirements [887] relating to the dual division. Along with this change in the criteria for selecting these officials has come a decrease in the power and the authority exercised by the *principales*—elders from each side of the dual division who rose to their position by passing through all of the lower offices in the hierarchy—and a corresponding increase in the importance of the presidency.

This dual division also affected the structure 621 632 754 of the curing profession. The curers are men who can overcome sickness caused by witchcraft because of their possession of an animal 756 spirit (*swayohel*) and their knowledge of ritual. In each of the two sections of the town was a leading curer (*stalal ʔuʔul*) who, by virtue of his age, experience, and recognized authority, was able to control entry into the profession. Their function was to prevent as well as cure, for the leading curers were also charged with guarding their section against the entry of witchcraft. In the last two decades, leadership 621 632 by recognized elder curers from each side of the 756 dual division has been lost, and along with it, 178 control over limiting the practicing of curing.

613 than three or four generations. In the past, these lineages were localized, and in places like Bachajon, Cancuc, and Oxchuc the exact locations are still remembered.

613 769 778 A few generations ago, the most distinguished members of each lineage were buried in the cave after which the paraje was named, the bones and ashes of the dead being placed in large jugs or urns. The caves were places for ceremonies honoring the ancestors. Blom (1954) made a study of these burials and mapped the distribution of the sites. These caves are still places for worship but not for burials; the cross protecting all members of the lineage is kept there, as well as, in some instances, small crosses belonging to the important members of it (Villa Rojas, 1946, p. 16).

614 The words *chapomal* and *tijinabal* name the members of the clan in general. It is said that "the neighbors of this paraje are all chapomales," or "those cannot get married because they are chapomales." Tijinabal also means neighbor or member of the same paraje. Another word, *patshunk*, is also an equivalent of tijinabal. These words are currently used in Oxchuc, Cancuc, and Bachajon. On the other hand, there is no specific word to designate the lineage.

[835] The main function of the clan is to regulate marriage, as the union of two chapomales is considered incestuous. The clan [574] also gives much self-confidence to the Indian who travels to other parajes, for he can always find hospitality among people of his own clan. It also has a function of social control, exercised by the old men of the group, who punish all transgressors against the established rules. Helped by the nagual (supernatural spirit), they find out about the behavior of the members of the clan and punish according to the crime (Villa Rojas, 1947).

614 626 887

613 428 The lineage relationship is also important in inheritance (especially land), since the plots should always be under the control of individuals of the same Indian name. Only where such persons are absent or missing or

[P 215-A]

631 the secretario, who is, without exception, a Ladino, for his responsibilities require a good knowledge of the Spanish language as well as office skills, which the Indians usually lack. Actually it is this official who controls all the administrative affairs of the municipio. He imposes fines, collects taxes, assigns communal work, and keeps in con-
[62] tact with the state authorities. After him rank the regidor, síndico, alcalde, police commander, and policemen.

621 Besides these authorities, which are the officially recognized ones, the Indians have their own government system, which in most places is still operating. Oxchuc is
[888] typical of the regional pattern. There the
[887] municipio is divided into two calpules, each of which is a kind of fraternity under the supervision of those old men having the
[776] greatest knowledge and prestige. Each cal-
[796] pul has also its own patron saint, venerated with special feasts and ceremonies throughout the year. (In Oxchuc the calpules are not geographically determined, and its members are spread in different parajes of
62 the territory.) Authority is now integrated in the following officials:

1 katinab, supreme chief of the whole calpul
1 okil kabil, "feet and hands" of the preceding, i.e., secretary
2 dzunubiles, supreme "pulsers" or "curers"
1 alcalde, who carries a staff of office
2 cornales (or governors), who also carry staffs of office
2 síndicos, who also carry staffs of office
4 x-jules (or regidores)

555 The four last jobs are reached by strict
624 hierarchy and indicate the progress of each
794 individual in the fulfillment of his social duties. This social-service career begins when the man is not yet married, when he is assigned the cargo of mayordomo of the church, which means that he has to attend to minor affairs connected with the church and to keep it clean. Shortly after his marriage he usually reaches the position of capitán, where he is responsible for the fies-

[P. 220-A]

6: Metzger E-5 (no date) 1964 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Aguacatenango

273 887 621 273 539 — Old men often give up drinking[30] except when, as office holders, they are obligated to participate in drinking performances. Changes in drinking patterns during the life cycle are discussed by Felix Perez as follows:

HTATIK TA HNA *AMETO LEK SYA*BE C'IN TRAWO, HO*TIK X*ATEHOTIK *A MATO HNA*TIK YUC'EL *A C'IN TRAWI.

My father drank aguardiente a lot. We worked, we didn't know how to drink aguardiente.

*EHK STUKEL KOM TA YUC'EL Z'IN *EHK C'IN TRAWI.

Then he himself stopped drinking trago.

*ATEHON HPAS PUERSA NAME TALE MATO KUC'LEK *EHK *A C'IN TRAWI.

I worked, I made an effort for several years. I didn't drink much trago.

YUN Z'IN TE HLIHK HZAK MANYA Z'IN *EHKE, KUC' PERO YUN LA KILIX TEK TE *AY TU*Y KUN Z'IN *EHKE.

Then the madness began to get hold of me, and I drank, but it was because I saw that I had something of my own.

Composition of drinking groups

273* 571 — Almost without exception, men drink in groups rather than alone. The importance of companions in the development of a 273* 539 571 drinking situation is suggested by Sabino Hernandez' description of one such situation:

TAL Z'IN *IL *ABANKIL, STAT CIKO, BETO Z'INI.

In came your elder brother, the father of Francisco, Alberto.

HUL SK'AN HUN KWARTA XC'IN YA*AL.

He came to ask for a cuarto of aguardiente.

7t Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

323 pyramid is complete, wood is laid against the pots in a tepee formation.
[313] When the sawmill in the vicinity was in operation, flat boards—scraps of
[372] cut lengths—were used, but now only logs are available. Corn husks or
[462] dry straw are stuffed between the planks or logs. When a large number of pots are being fired, the men usually help at the final stages to remove the
[476] charred planks with poles. If men are not available, the women of the
[292] household often call upon their neighbors for help. In this operation, the women wear sandals and hats for protection from the heat. When the pots are cooled, the women, sometimes with the help of the men, stack them in net bags, six to a net with straw protecting the pots.

647 About fifteen year ago, a kiln was introduced by the government in the
177 interest of conserving wood. Those who tried it claim that the pottery did
323 not fire well and that many of the pots were broken. I.N.I. (the Instituto
372 Nacional Indigenista) planned to introduce an improved kiln, and while most of the people we questioned expressed a willingness to try it, the proposal was never put into action.

462 The men do most of the marketing of pottery. Loads of one or two
442 dozen may be taken by bus or truck to San Cristóbal or to Comitán.
443 When there is large-scale production throughout the community, as occurs
494 just before major fiestas, truckers come from the neighboring town of Teopisca to contract for delivery.

592 The amount of pottery produced in households varies with the follow-
323 ing factors:
433

1. Household composition: (a) Number of women in the family.
[464] If there is only one woman, very little or no pottery is produced because of the demands of domestic duties. Households with two or more women are able to sustain the ideal output of at least a dozen water jugs a week (I use "ideal" here to suggest their notion of what they produce when asked to guess. As Fig. 2 indicates, this varies considerably during the
• [887] year.) (b) Age of women and ages of children. Older women over sixty do not independently undertake pottery production. They may assist in washing pots with corn gruel or making the neck, mouth, and handles, but they are unable to endure the harder task of collecting clay. A woman with infants under two years of age makes little pottery if

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

The following list of moral transgressions is roughly ordered in terms of the egregiousness of the crime: witchcraft, theft of cattle, theft of corn, "talking with" a woman (this is a euphemism for having an affair), having more than one wife, killing, and disrespect to parents. There is a fair amount of consistency in the rank order given by different informants. Of five people questioned, all ranked witchcraft first, and theft, without qualification as to what was stolen, second. Subjects questioned differentiated the crime of "talking with" a woman according to the status of the woman —it was worse to have relations with a married woman than with an unmarried girl or with a widow. Killing was listed late or not at all by some because it is assumed that the killer has cause unless the contrary is proved. The dead man is referred to as the guilty one. It is considered worse to kill a consanguineous relative than an affinal relative or a nonrelative. One man remarking on an incident in which a person lost his bull said: "It was a punishment of God for killing his father. If it had been his stepfather, it would be different." Wanton killing is said to be absent in the pueblo, and something that the kurik of the colonias do. The three murders in the past ten years resulting from barroom brawls between "friends" have not dispelled this notion.

Disrespect shown to parents is considered a serious violation of morality. A boy who refuses to listen to his father cannot expect to receive the protection and support of his parents, usually offered a child throughout their lifetime, or of the community. If the son abuses his father verbally or physically in public, the father is supported in whatever action he takes. One father, whose son kicked him in one of the local bars, drew applause when he made the sign of the cross in two deep gashes with his machete on his son's forehead. To beat one's father or mother is a great sin, but to beat one's wife is tolerated, particularly if it is done in drunkenness. If a man other than the husband beats a woman for any cause, she may reciprocate by beating him in court "before the eyes of the judges." One woman who was awarded this privilege when her husband's brother beat her said, "If he were my own husband, it would be all right for him to beat me."

The good man is "of one heart" and reveals it by his humility ("very soft heart"). The rules for demonstrating this are given by an old man who is frequently asked to be a nakawane in his section of the dual divi-

sion: "I pay respect to my elders. I greet my brothers and my children [extension of kinship terms]. To all I give respect. Thus I fare well. I have not been killed, nor have I been sick."

A good man is a generous host, expressed in the phrase, "he gives many tortillas." He serves his community in public office but avoids the appearance of seeking power or self-aggrandizement. When he gives orders, it is in a soft, low tone, supplicating rather than ordering with the phrase, "If you would please lend a hand." He gives thanks readily for any service rendered both to God and to his fellow man. He avoids any show of anger, and is always careful to show consideration of others. Those who are of "another heart" or "two-hearted" are the opposite, seeking disputes, "thinking small," "being miserly," and of a "very black soul."

The heightened awareness of the state of the heart of others comes from the ever-present fear of witchcraft. Since the people feel their survival depends upon perception of evil heart before it strikes, they develop an acute sense of the behavioral clues that indicate its presence.

Conformity and deviance. Conventional or preferred behavior is characterized as "reasonable." The phrase "*?iʔ* rason," to take reason or understanding, is applied to a child who is expected to have reason at the age of twelve years or so, as well as to the arrival at agreement of competing parties, as in the case of betrothal.

Reasonable behavior is any behavior conforming to socially accepted understandings of what the world is. These include what a person of non-Indian culture might characterize as beliefs based on faith. They "know" that there are hill spirits, wood spirits who cut off people's heads, and men who transform themselves into animals. Occasionally they subject given understandings to empirical tests: one woman tested the belief that a woman could rid the milpa of insect pests only by walking through a planted field wearing a new skirt; she walked through the field wearing a worn skirt and her belief was confirmed when she found that the insect pests were not killed but just fled and returned later. Empiricism is not lacking; the difference between the content of their category of what is rational or reasonable and ours is based on the premises, not the process of reasoning.

621 his children, nor can he keep control of village affairs after his year of service has been fulfilled. Even a man occupying a post of high responsibility and prestige, a juez (judge) for example, becomes just an ordinary citizen after he leaves the office. All the men in the village theoretically, and most of them in practice, become village officers at some time in their life.

An individual starts at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder in the cargo of policía (also called mayor, topil or comisariado), which is a messenger or cleaning and errand boy for both the Mayordomos and Cabildo members. (He is the hands and feet [581] of the government.) The only requirement for this job is to be married. After this position has been "passed," a man is ready to start climbing the ladder to higher officerships, if he fulfills [521] the other requirements. He must have a child, a wife, and the [555] money which he is compelled to spend as part of the job: new clothes, liquor, and perhaps money to pay other men to help him with the agricultural work to which he cannot, being an officer, dedicate his full time.

During his life time, a man is required to pass a certain number of positions in the government, alternating Church and Ayuntamiento posts with rest periods of between one and three 62 years. After he passes the required number of officerships, and • 887 by then he would be an old man, he becomes, automatically, a 888 pasado (a man that has passed his service), and can retire to private life, or become a principal, a member of the Elders' Council, a "father of the town." The Principales are the elder men in the village, highly respected for their wisdom and sought

62
887 888 after for advice in many different events, such as helping to decide the divisions of an inheritance among brothers, giving advice to a drunkard husband, etc. They also have important political functions: they are called in by the Ayuntamiento to help solve the difficult witchcraft cases, and they have to approve the nominations of officers before they are presented to the community as candidates.

621 554 In selecting new officers, age, marital status, seniority rights and previous experience are considered important. The higher a position in the hierarchy, the more respected it is and the more authority and responsibility it carries. While the lower positions can be filled by any man, the higher ones require certain personal skills that not everybody possesses, so it becomes more difficult to find the right man for the job. Some men fail in commanding the respect of their fellow citizens (because they drink, or they fight with their neighbors, or similar breaches of behavior for which they are not selected for cargo), or they become senile, or die before they become pasados, so not every man arrives at the ideal and most reputable role of Principal, which is the top role a man can achieve at the community level.

621 624 554 To be a principal a man has to be able to get along with his kinsmen and neighbors, he should not be suspected of witchcraft, he should be able to deal with outsiders to the community avoiding conflict with them, he should be fast in judging the behavior of others and solving problems, and his word has to be precise and carry the necessary weight to convince others that his opinions are sound (un hombre que "sabe hablar"). Moreover, he can more easily